

INTRODUCTION

by DAN WEES

Once work had been completed on my 2023 release *From Concept to Binding*, I had produced the necessary required elements to begin this project, *Original Intent: Early Changes to the Book of Mormon Manuscripts*. This enterprise is a multi-volume analysis of the corrections made to the *Original Manuscript* (OM; the real-time dictation of the Book of Mormon by Joseph Smith, Jr.), before the 1830 printed production of the Book of Mormon (BOM). When the OM is unavailable, the *Printer's Manuscript* (PM; a duplicate of the OM; copied mostly by Oliver Cowdery, which accounts for about 72% of the damaged/missing OM), is referenced instead.

Besides offering a critical analysis of the changes made to these manuscripts, the following items were included to make this difficult adventure easier for the reader. Though I confess I might have failed in making things easier, at the very least, the student will have access to several things to help make referencing quicker:

From Concept to Binding:

The formatting of the OM, the PM, and the 1830 first printed edition, follow the three-column use of these documents, respectively. The data for the OM and the PM is provided from *The Handwritten Book of Mormon* (2017). The 1830 column information comes directly from the *Joseph Smith Papers* site. Certain spacing issues have made it impossible to offer this data in the precise way it was in *From Concept to Binding*, but these spacing differences are minimal.

Current Edition of the Book of Mormon:

It is important to view these early documents in their currently accepted format. These are not delivered in a fourth column but are displayed in *smaller italicized fonts* after the passage is introduced in **reversed** type.

The format then adds the *analysis portion*, which comprises three categories:

- ISSUE IN QUESTION
- EXPLANATION
- SUMMARY

A final element is introduced: A comparative look at the BOM verse against one from the *Authorized King James Version of the Bible* (AKJV). These comparisons, gleaned from **TBTBOMC: The Bible To Book Of Mormon Comparative** (2019-2021), are not present in every verse being analyzed - but for *most* of them. The comparisons usually have little to do with the analysis, but help highlight Joseph Smith Jr's. incorporation of the AKJV within the BOM. It could be easy to mistake these additions as *trivia*, but they represent some of the better selections from the three-volume set and are just as vital (if not more) as other information.

The SUMMARY sections of this book are heavily influenced by Royal Skousen's 2004 six-volume, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon* set. Though Skousen's treatments include all varieties of BOM verse, they do not always address the differences between the OM, the PM, and the 1830 first edition directly. At times, he does not address certain changes at all. It is difficult to ascertain bias in Skousen's work since he makes a great effort toward neutrality. Unfortunately, because he evaluates everything from the perspective of a faithful member of the church, his bias shows up in other ways. He tends to overuse variations of the word *accidentally*, as a way to avoid discussing elements of controversy. It is also used to *throw shade* on others, instead of placing the blame on the source: Joseph

Smith, Jr. I'm not interested in avoiding controversy or throwing my brand of *shade* on Skousen, or anyone else, for their faith. I'm interested in the raw data, and the closer it gets to the source, the better. So much so, that the OM/PM references in this production, borrowed from *The Handwritten Book of Mormon*, provide *only* the original pen markings before any change, modification, or redaction. Royal Skousen deserves our gratitude for undertaking such a herculean task and being among the first to dive into the minutiae.

As you will see, the manuscripts are littered with thousands of errors. From 1827-1830, Joseph Smith, Jr. and his gang of scribes produced these documents to the best of their ability, which is *sometimes* not saying much. Joseph's words were not handled by seasoned professionals, they were written by close friends and relations who had never done anything like this and were not trained in recording dictation. Even Oliver Cowdery, who had some experience in teaching and typesetting, was challenged by this task. *Original Intent* is not focused on minor issues of spelling unless the spelling produces insight into intent. Punctuation is absent for much of the OM and the PM, which gave the printers incredible responsibility to interpret where commas, periods, and other punctuation should reside. They were masterful, but not inerrant. The student can look directly across the three columns to see the transformation of the text and can judge its ultimate evolution by reading it in the currently published edition.

There are several times when Joseph Smith, Jr. patches two concepts together by using "*in other words*" to do it; sometimes he only uses the word "*or*" to accomplish this. An example can be found in Alma 24:19:

... thus we see that they buried their weapons of peace, **or** they buried the weapons of war, for peace.

The use of "*or*" in this passage brings clarity to an otherwise perplexing concept of *their weapons of peace*:

... thus we see that **they buried their weapons of peace**, or **they buried the weapons of war, for peace**.

Perhaps no one has analyzed the use of "*in other words*" more than H. Michael Marquardt. I am indebted to his work in identifying these important passages. I am also indebted to him for being a direct mentor since 2018; reading my titles before publication, and giving insight in ways I'd never dreamed of previously. Beyond all of this, our work together has blossomed into a friendship. He is a kind, genteel, thoughtful, funny, and generous man. He gives his time freely and calls regularly to check on my progress, as well as to offer produce from his gorgeous garden. Thank you, Mike.

Original Intent provides the student with the following:

The entire pre-edited version of the *Original Manuscript*.

The entire pre-edited version of the *Printer's Manuscript*.

The 2023 JSP's copy of the 1830 *First Printed Edition*.

The 2013, currently accepted version of the *Book of Mormon*.

Critical analysis for every insertion, modification, and redaction in the OM (or the PM when the OM is not extant) where intent is realized, or where speculation can be addressed.

Comparative verses between the BOM and the AKJV Bible; occasionally featuring strings of *exact* matches, but always showing Joseph's love of the Bible.

SYMBOLS & EXPLANATIONS

The individual entry is ordered in the following manner:

Original Manuscript	Printer’s Manuscript	1830 Printed Edition
Book, Chapter:Verse [OM content]	Book, Chapter:Verse [PM content]	Book, Chapter:Verse [1830 edition content]

Book, Chapter:Verse

This section is dedicated to the digitally published Book of Mormon scriptures of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Non-italic-Bold type in this section is meant to emphasize the issue being addressed.

ISSUE IN QUESTION:

The purpose of this production.

Italicized words in this section are meant to reference specifics about the question.

EXPLANATION:

This section is used to describe the reason for the ISSUE IN QUESTION and may contain *italicized* or **bold** words for emphasis.

SUMMARY:

This section is used to conclude or speculate about the ISSUE IN QUESTION. The sections from ISSUE IN QUESTION to SUMMARY will be repeated on the same page (as space permits), to address additional issues within the same verse.

TBTBOMC:

The Bible to Book of Mormon Comparative. This section highlights compelling matches found between the AKJV and the BOM. They are not always related to the issues addressed above, but give insight into Joseph’s incorporation of the Bible in his text.

- Superscript

 Insertions - when words or letters are added as an immediate correction. Typically, though not always, these words (or letters) are inserted directly above or near the error – mostly accompanied by a caret mark. Later insertions (different sitting, by the same or alternate scribes) have been ignored. There are a few instances of an ^{insert <within> an insertion}. When this happens the extra insert is found in ^{<Superscript>} with “<” and “>” added for identification.
- Strikethrough

 A ~~strikethrough~~ is used with words, letters, or spaces identified as being ~~incorrect~~ or in ~~error~~ in some way.
- ◇

 An illegible character within a partially legible word is rendered with a hollow diamond. Repeated diamonds represent the approximate number of illegible charac◇◇◇s. A ~~strikethrough~~ diamond is represented as ◇.

ACRONYMS

1830	The year of the first printed edition of the Book of Mormon.
PM	<i>Printer's Manuscript</i>
OM	<i>Original Manuscript</i>
BOM	Book of Mormon
AKJV	Authorized King James Version of the Bible.
OT	Old Testament
NT	New Testament
OI	Original Intent
JSP	<i>The Joseph Smith Papers - Church Historian's Press project (2008-2023).</i>
JS	Joseph Smith, Jr.
OC	Oliver Cowdery
MH	Martin Harris
JW	John Whitmer – sometimes known as Scribe #2.
S ₃	Unknown Third Scribe
JG	John Gilbert - main typesetter for the 1830 first printed edition.
RS	Royal Skousen
RSTV	Royal Skousen's <i>Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon (2004).</i>

IOWC *In Other Words Clarification.* Occasionally, JS patches two concepts together with *in other words* (or something similar). This *dictation stutter* is a clear indicator he dictated the text, as opposed to reciting it from a book. The result? The words after *in other words* are meant to bring clarity to the words before *in other words*.

TAL *Typesetter's Artistic Liberty.* A typesetting team is determined to produce a book without error. Whether an error was their fault, or the fault of the author is not of concern, just that the text will be corrected before printing. Occasionally, the typesetter would be required to take an artistic liberty, by changing a letter or word, to make the sentence work. Throughout, they added punctuation, which sometimes produced unintended results. Even with this challenge, the typesetting team had to remain true to as much of the manuscript as possible. Because the BOM was being printed as an additional volume, to complement the AKJV, the team needed to compare their copy of the Bible to extended BOM passages quoted from Nephi's descriptions of *The Brass Plates of Laban* – A so-called collection of Jewish writings from Genesis to Isaiah (through 600 BCE), which Nephi pilfered once he murdered Laban. Isaiah, incidentally, has the most identifiable parallels in First and Second Nephi – which were written near the end of the entire dictation process.

JS 1836-7 During the winter of 1836/7, JS began a major editing campaign. He would make hundreds of changes to the pages of the PM, which had already been used to produce the first printed edition six years before. The changes were an improvement, but should the OM, the PM, and the 1830 edition be seen as canonical errors? In an attempt to discover *Original Intent*, the changes made about eight years later are usually not relevant, even though they were by the author and leader of a growing religion. But, sometimes these edits conflict with the OM, the PM, and the 1830 edition. They deserve exposure as to how they alter the *Original Intent*.

- CBTH** The *Cart Before the Horse*. During Joseph's dictation, the scribe would occasionally mentally jumble the order of words from which they were delivered. Given the gravity of the adventure and the speed at which the pages were produced, it is perfectly understandable to find mistakes, even among the most polished scribes. Typically, if you read a few words forward in the sentence, you find a match that normally negates the need for the previous word.
- SPEC** One of the more important targets of this critical analysis is the *speculation* regarding changes made to the text. Since a decent ink eraser was not on the market in 1828, it was difficult to remove a word from the page, as the ink would need to be scraped off with a knife. It is understandable why OM scribes would choose to strikethrough words rather than stop to scrape them. The words were rolling from Joseph's mouth too quickly for extra work. Even a ~~strikethrough~~ can reveal a bias or pre-conceived notion about the progress of a sentence, especially when you're writing in longhand, as fast as you can. With so many spelling problems in the OM, basing *intent* on alternative spellings is difficult at best. **SPEC** analysis will be limited to only convincing arguments, regardless of whether they are correct or not.
- A PREP** The archaic prepositional *a* was frequently used before certain words during the production of the BOM. By the 20th century, its use was seen as informal. All instances have been removed from the BOM, even though it was used in the AKJV.
- TBTBOMC** Items with this identification will showcase parallels from the three-volume set: *The Bible to Book of Mormon Comparative* (free at BOMsource.com).